

# Address by Parliamentary Secretary Obhrai at the Global Counterterrorism Forum

September 27, 2013 - New York City, New York

## Check Against Delivery

On behalf of Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, John Baird, I would like to thank the United States and Turkey for their continued efforts in leading this forum.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend our deepest condolences to the people of Kenya and Pakistan and to members of this forum who suffered losses in last weekend's attacks at a shopping centre in Nairobi and on a church in Peshawar.

Canada condemns these senseless acts of violence in the strongest of terms. Two Canadians were among the victims in Nairobi, including a diplomat based at our high commission in Kenya.

In addition, Canada feels strongly that the attack on a church in Pakistan was an act of cowardly violence that brutally targeted innocent worshippers. We believe that all religious communities should be free from fear so that they may practise their faith in peace and security.

Canada also condemns in the strongest terms the terrorism recently deployed in Jammu and Kashmir, and in the region more broadly over the course of the last decade.

It is clear that ungoverned spaces and disputed borders are havens for terrorism.

Radicals who know no rules and states that sponsor terrorism as an extension of their policy put themselves outside any definition of international legitimacy. We condemn in the strongest terms the notion that terrorism can be appeased or tolerated in our time. As Minister Baird has often said, the test of terrorism is the test of our generation. It is a fierce contest of wills—of freedom versus fear, of a constitutional, democratic order against an old tyranny that takes form in new ways in every generation.

We hope the perpetrators of these terrorist attacks are brought to justice. As we mourn the losses, we are reminded of terrorism's global reach. Unless we work together, we are all vulnerable to threats, at home and abroad.

Since its launch two years ago, the GCTF [Global Counterterrorism Forum] has been successful in mobilizing all 30 members to identify gaps and mobilize resources to provide counterterrorism capacity building in the most vulnerable areas of the world.

The development of documents on good practices has provided us with tools for our current and future project implementation.

Canada welcomes the adoption of three new GCTF good practices, including two on countering violent extremism that take a practical approach to addressing the threat.

We agree it is crucial to support those stricken by terrorist acts, and we welcome the Madrid Memorandum on Good Practices for Assistance to Victims of Terrorism Immediately After the Attack and in Criminal Proceedings.

Canada recognizes victims of terrorism, and we are providing them with a means to seek justice.

In 2012, Canada passed the *Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act*, which allows victims to sue perpetrators of terrorism and those who support them.

Canada is very pleased to continue to co-chair, with Algeria, the Sahel Working Group on Counterterrorism Capacity Building for an additional two years.

I would like to thank all members and partners for their participation in our working group, in particular those who led or hosted events, including the United States and Niger on border security; Denmark and Burkina Faso on community engagement to counter radicalization; Switzerland, Nigeria and GIABA [the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa] on countering the financing of terrorism; and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Morocco's Conference on Regional Cooperation in Criminal Matters Related to Terrorism.

I think that all participants would agree that these events have created a network where our collaboration is generating solutions to key Sahel challenges.

Canada is committed to this forum's coordinated, action-oriented and results-based approach to countering terrorism. Since 2011, Canada's Counter-Terrorism Capacity Building Program has disbursed approximately \$38 million toward global counterterrorism capacity-building efforts. This has included training law enforcement officials, increasing border security in 10 countries and strengthening legal regimes in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and Southeast Asia, as well as projects in the area of criminal justice and the rule of law.

Canada has disbursed \$24 million in programming support for the Sahel. In addition, new funding of \$1.2 million was recently announced by Minister Baird for initiatives to strengthen border security and judicial systems in the region. Beneficiary countries include Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Tunisia.

To enhance judicial systems, Canada will fund a UNODC [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime] project to implement counterterrorism legal frameworks in the Sahel region, effectively allowing for suspected terrorists to be brought to justice.

To strengthen border security, Canada will fund the International Civilian Aviation Organization (housed in Montréal) to provide training to address deficiencies in travel document issuance and control, identity management and border security.

More specialized training will concentrate on enhancing travel document and border security for combatting terrorism and cross-border crime in the region.

Canada looks forward to continuing its collaboration with all members and taking this forum forward into its next phase, ensuring it remains action oriented and inclusive.

In this vein, we seek the inclusion of non-GCTF member participation in all working groups where their experience is relevant and benefits the forum.

The participation of non-members provides valuable insights and information into the threats, gaps and recommended solutions.

The success of our counterterrorism cooperation and capacity building requires the participation and leadership of all relevant experts, especially those regional countries that face the challenges of terrorism on a daily basis.

Global problems require global solutions, and Canada looks forward to continuing to coordinate its efforts through the Global Counterterrorism Forum. I know our will is stronger and more sustained than the will of those who seek to subvert us.

Thank you.